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Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng ..... (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Safety and security of United Nations personnel (*continued*) (A/56/469 and Corr.1 and A/56/619)

1. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey, and, in addition, Liechtenstein, paid tribute to the courage and dedication of United Nations and humanitarian personnel who had lost their lives or been victims of crimes in the line of duty.

2. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Organization and its Secretary-General was a reminder of the vital role played by the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security. During the previous decade, the European Union had been working within the Organization to enhance the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel at all levels. Security measures were an essential function of the United Nations and must be coordinated under the authority of the Secretary-General, with adequate and predictable funding based on fair cost-sharing arrangements that encompassed the whole of the United Nations system. The European Union noted with satisfaction that the Secretary-General had underscored the need to improve and strengthen coordinating mechanisms between the Organization and its specialized agencies, funds and programmes and that the culture of security awareness that was being promoted by the Secretary-General's personal efforts was beginning to have tangible effects.

3. The European Union would carefully consider the financial impact of the Secretary-General's proposals, which sought to meet the legitimate expectations of United Nations personnel for more effective protection. The proposals, however, should cover all high-risk duty stations. The Union endorsed the substance of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), in particular the conclusions contained in paragraphs 14 to 16 of its report (A/56/619). The principle of shared financial responsibility in the coordinated management of the safety and security of United Nations personnel and the implementation of a coherent security policy throughout the United Nations system were the cornerstones of the security system. The European Union therefore welcomed the timely adoption of the necessary cost-sharing arrangements by the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and the specialized agencies, funds and programmes. In order for those arrangements to work, however, the posts of Security Coordinator and Deputy Security Coordinator should be established as full-time posts and at an adequate level. Above all, participating institutions should ensure that their own security measures were consistent with the commitments they had entered into, were financially transparent, and contributed to the synergies and coherence of the common system.

4. The European Union shared the Advisory Committee's view that a prolonged discussion on defining clear lines of responsibility and accountability in ensuring the safety and security of staff would be unacceptable. The issue should be addressed expeditiously, taking into account Article 74 of the Charter.

5. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Organization should take all necessary steps to update its security arrangements and to provide adequate resources for its operational requirements, without reducing the level of resources allocated to other mandated activities, particularly in the area of development.

6. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the cost-sharing arrangements between participating agencies, funds and programmes and endorsed the recommendations contained in paragraphs 15 and 16 of the Advisory Committee's report. It also shared the Advisory Committee's opinion that further efforts should be made to clarify the relationship and interaction between the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

7. With regard to the Secretary-General's staffing proposals, further information should be provided on the high-risk duty stations that had been identified, including a more detailed definition of such stations.

8. The Group of 77 and China noted with concern that not all of the additional posts that had been approved with a view to enhancing the safety and security of United Nations personnel had been filled and it hoped that action on the matter would be

expedited. Clear lines of responsibility and accountability in ensuring the safety and security of staff were an essential element of the Secretary-General's proposals, and the Group of 77 and China would welcome additional information on the subject. Lastly, the Group of 77 and China wished to stress that, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, United Nations personnel should respect the local laws of the host countries in the discharge of their responsibilities.

9. **Mr. Kendall** (Argentina) said that the question of the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel was a key item on the Committee's agenda, since it involved the very lives of those serving the Organization. During its term as President of the Security Council in 2000, Argentina had promoted the item and had contributed to the trust fund for the security of United Nations personnel.

10. The item was being considered against the backdrop of a tense international environment made worse by the attack the previous September on the city that was host to the Organization's Headquarters and by the often dangerous conditions under which the United Nations was required to undertake a growing number of missions. While the main responsibility for the safety and security of United Nations mission personnel lay with receiving Governments, the Organization must itself ensure that the security management system was adequate to the new challenges that faced the United Nations both at Headquarters and in the field and that adequate resources were made available to the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals for cost-sharing arrangements between United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes.

11. His delegation supported the proposal that the post of United Nations Security Coordinator should be established at the Assistant Secretary-General level and that of Deputy Security Coordinator at the D-2 level in order to provide essential leadership in security coordination and management. While it agreed in principle with the Secretary-General's proposals for new posts, a plan should be drawn up as early as possible to define responsibilities in the area of security, particularly in the field. Adequate funding should also be provided for continuous security training.

12. **Ms. Buchanan** (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of the delegations of Australia and Canada, said that action across a range of fronts was required to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel: resource and structural issues in the Fifth Committee, political and humanitarian concerns in the plenary Assembly and the legal aspects of protection in the Sixth Committee. The need to update the United Nations security management system, based on the changed security environment in which the Organization and its implementing partners now operated, had been compounded by the events of 11 September. United Nations personnel operating in the field faced increasing danger in the execution of their duty; 201 deaths since 1992 and 255 hostage-taking incidents since 1994 were grim testimony to that trend. She therefore strongly endorsed the need to implement measures to strengthen safety and security arrangements in the field.

13. While generally endorsing the conclusions in the report of the Advisory Committee, she drew attention to the need to include consideration of security at Headquarters, too. She supported the strengthening of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator as a distinct and clearly identifiable structure, headed by a single Coordinator with comprehensive responsibility for security at Headquarters and in the field, but warned that the complexity of the task would require strong leadership. The new Coordinator, as the focal point for inter-agency cooperation, would need to display such leadership. Field operations must include activities designed to foster improved knowledge of the risks at hand, enhanced interaction with other humanitarian actors, and an increased sense of priority and responsibility on the part of host Governments. Priority should be given to the filling of new posts and the staffing of all high-risk duty stations.

14. She agreed with the principle of collective responsibility reflected in the cost-sharing arrangement proposed between the United Nations and participating organizations. The new formula was clear and balanced, and provided a built-in mechanism for review in July 2003. Nevertheless, given the sum of money and the number of organizations involved, the new system would need to be monitored carefully. Therefore she endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendation that an annual deadline should be established for receipt of payments from participating organizations and that the apportioned share of the

United Nations should not be exceeded without prior General Assembly approval. She agreed that a report assessing the progress and effectiveness of new measures should be prepared for consideration at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, and supported the request for a review to ensure that complete security coverage was extended to all 80 high-risk duty stations.

15. The current proposals had significant budgetary, administrative and human resource implications and would require an unprecedented level of cooperation between organizations. She drew attention to the need for careful planning of accountability processes, lines of authority and effective coordination. The degree of cooperation shown in devising the cost-sharing arrangement must also be shown at both the strategic and operational levels. Lastly, sufficient funds and human resources must be released to underpin support for enhanced safety and security.

16. **Ms. Merchant** (Norway) said that the alarming number of recent incidents in which deliberate harm, including killings, abductions, harassment and illegal detentions, had been done to United Nations personnel was a matter of great concern. Even more unacceptable was the fact that those criminal acts had been carried out with almost total impunity. Indeed, in the history of the United Nations, only six persons involved in the violent deaths of United Nations staff had ever been brought to justice. The primary responsibility for ensuring the safety of United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel lay with the parties to a conflict and with host Governments, which must see to it that those accused of violence against United Nations personnel were vigorously prosecuted. The international community nevertheless shared a collective responsibility for protecting those who courageously put their lives on the line in order to provide assistance and protection in areas of hostility and open warfare.

17. Her delegation supported the Secretary-General's staffing proposals, including the establishment of the post of United Nations Security Coordinator at the Assistant Secretary-General level. It supported the Advisory Committee's call, however, for a review of high-risk duty stations to ensure complete coverage for all such duty stations, and shared the opinion that further efforts should be made to clarify the relationship and interaction between the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It was also important to define clear lines of responsibility and accountability in ensuring the safety and security of staff, and to establish a clear chain of command between Headquarters and the field. Moreover, responsibility for security policies should be centralized within the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and those policies should be observed by all organizations of the United Nations system. A report on the progress achieved in that regard should be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

18. Continuous training was crucial to the success of any security operation and her delegation therefore supported the establishment of a Security Training Unit. Lastly, her delegation welcomed the new and more equitable cost-sharing arrangements for the United Nations security management system and supported the Advisory Committee's request that the Secretary-General should report on the experience related to the implementation of the agreement.

19. **Mr. Chandra** (India) said that the safety and security of United Nations personnel were a matter of great importance to his delegation. It welcomed the cost-sharing arrangements for the United Nations security management system and would work with like-minded delegations on measures to enhance the safety and security of United Nations personnel. He was confident that the Committee's concerns would be reflected in the draft resolution to be adopted on the item.

20. **Mr. Elgammal** (Egypt) said that his delegation's position had already been expressed in the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. After listening to the statements by the representatives of Belgium, speaking on behalf of the European Union, and of Norway, however, he wished to voice his concern at the introduction of the concept of "associated personnel". The Committee was considering the Secretary-General's proposals for strengthening security arrangements for United Nations personnel and the budgetary implications of those proposals, and he hoped that it would not be distracted by a discussion of the concept of "associated personnel".

21. **Mr. Sevan** (United Nations Security Coordinator) said that the Committee's discussion of the current item

would serve not only to enhance the safety and security of United Nations personnel in the field but also to boost the morale of all staff, who for too long had heard much talk on the subject but seen little action.

22. He had taken note of the concerns that had been expressed. On the subject of high-risk duty stations, the number of such stations must be kept under constant review, since areas that were currently quiet could suddenly become dangerous. Situations were never static and it was possible that the Secretary-General might return to the Committee at a later stage with a request for additional funding. He himself would be leaving office at the end of the current year and it was a matter of great personal satisfaction that increased budgetary and staffing resources would be available to his successor. He wished to thank the members of the Committee for the support they had given him during his term of office.

23. **The Chairman** thanked the Security Coordinator for his contribution to the work of the Committee during his term of office.

Agenda item 134: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East (*continued*)

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (*continued*) (A/56/431 and Corr.1, A/56/510 and Corr.1)

24. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey, and, in addition, Norway, said it was regrettable that the reports on financing proposals had not been submitted within the relevant deadlines. He welcomed the proposal in the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/431 and Corr.1) that the budget for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) should be reduced by 31 per cent in relation to the budget for the previous period, and endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in its report (A/56/510 and Corr.1).

Agenda item 141: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (*continued*) (A/56/487 and A/56/621)

25. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was the largest and most complex peacekeeping operation that the United Nations had ever carried out, and the budget proposal by the Secretary-General represented a 31.3 per cent increase in relation to the budget for the financial period 2000-2001. The European Union shared the doubts expressed by the Advisory Committee about the capacity of the Mission to commit and use all the resources that had been requested. He noted that as of 16 October 2001, $41.3 million of a total authorized budget of $275 million for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2001 remained unspent. Consequently, he would appreciate an explanation from the Secretary-General of the reason for the request for a further $86 million for the following period. It would also be useful to synchronize the mandates of peacekeeping operations with the budgetary cycle, since the current policy complicated the process of predicting expenditure for Member States.

26. The European Union had already expressed its concerns regarding certain operational aspects of UNAMSIL, including its structure and management, during the fifty-sixth session. The Mission still appeared to have considerable staffing and recruitment problems and he expressed concern over the high vacancy rates: 14.7 per cent for international staff and 17.1 per cent for local staff. In the light of those statistics, he questioned the need for the creation of additional posts. It would also be necessary to examine very carefully the reclassification proposals, as well as the policy on gender parity both within UNAMSIL and in operations in the field. There had always been difficulties with both wet-leasing and self-sustainment. The slow pace of processing claims for contingent-owned equipment was probably partially due to the inadequacy of resources for the verifications process in the field; it would be useful to consider whether that problem was linked to the vacancy rate. There had also been lengthy delays in concluding memoranda of understanding. He understood that the estimated total of $86.3 million for contingent-owned material did not include the reimbursement of troop-contributing countries which already had troops in the field but which had yet to begin negotiations for memoranda of understanding. Without a review of the memoranda of understanding, the United Nations might assume responsibility for functions which were supposedly covered by the contingents, and that might lead to duplication. His delegation welcomed the efforts made to resolve those difficulties.

27. He expressed satisfaction at the termination of the logistical contract referred to in paragraph 39 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/487). Drawing attention to paragraphs 49 and 50 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/621), he said that situations of that kind ran contrary to the efforts of the Secretary-General and the General Assembly to carry out the budgetary and administrative reform of the Organization and illustrated the importance of respect for resolutions 55/232 and 55/247. It was important for all concerned to learn from the mistakes of the past. Noting that the Mission had recently been equipped with an "executive" jet aircraft, he drew attention to the Advisory Committee's report of the previous year (A/55/839), in which it had urged the Secretary-General to seek other commercial arrangements, since private means of transport should not be considered a priority. He would also appreciate details from the Secretariat of the progress made by UNAMSIL in implementing the recommendations of the Board of Auditors contained in its report (A/55/5). He asked whether more information could be given regarding measures taken by UNAMSIL to respond to the conclusions of the internal auditors which were referred to briefly in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) (A/56/381), particularly concerning deficiencies in the management of service contracts, and internal control in procurement, financial management, travel, leave and attendance, property management and transport operations. OIOS had carried out a study into subsistence allowance rates and found that those of UNAMSIL and six other missions were excessive. The rates should be revised and the revised rates should be applied during the development of the new budget arrangements. A withdrawal strategy for UNAMSIL should also be considered, bearing in mind the developments in the field and the return to a political process in the country.

28. He emphasized that the rigorous examination of the management deficiencies of UNAMSIL did not detract from the importance that the European Union attached to the operation and to its central role in the stabilization of Sierra Leone. The problems were not confined to UNAMSIL, and illustrated the urgent need for reform of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The reforms should be both qualitative and quantitative, and designed not only to resolve the deficiencies in personnel structure, but also to change the culture of management in that Department.

29. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) asked why the report of the Secretary-General under agenda item 141 had not been introduced by a representative of the Secretary-General. It was inappropriate for the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to introduce such a report. His delegation intended to take up the matter with the Secretariat.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.